

UP FROM THE DIRT

Commander Booth Tells the Story of "Ashbarrel Jimmy."

CHARACTER IN POLICE LIFE

How One of the Thousands in New York Was Reformed by the First Salvation Army in the Country.

Our first convert in America is still living and serving the army in Boston. The history of his reform is a remarkable one.

The conversion of the first of a mighty multitude was brought about by Commissioner Bailton, then in command of the American forces of the army, and Superintendent Thomas Byrnes, of the New York police. Mr. Byrnes was an inspector of police at the time, early in 1910.

It is hardly necessary to follow our first convert from saloon to prison and from prison to work. The path of the drunkard is well known. He became hungry and penniless and snatched a lady's pocketbook and was sent to Auburn, the New York state prison. There are times in a drunkard's life when he ceases making promises and taking pledges. So many have been



COMMISSIONER BAILTON.

taken only to be broken that the thoroughly discouraged victim submits patiently to what he considers his fate and drifts to hell on the dark current of despair without ever disturbing the murky waters with an effort to escape sure and certain destruction. While in Auburn prison Jimmy seems to have abandoned hope, for immediately on his release he went to New York and joined a notorious gang of gamblers—the Waynes. To Jimmy was assigned the task of watching the "cop" while the other members of the gang robbed their victims. Jimmy's watchful eye, however, proved traitor, for the gang was arrested after a short but lucrative existence, and a number of them were sent to Sing Sing prison. But Jimmy was one of the Waynes who got off.

Three times Jimmy narrowly escaped losing his life. On one occasion he was nearly frozen to death outside "Billy" McElroy's notorious dive; on another occasion he was so brutally beaten in a Water street fight that he was supposed to be dead. The morgue wagon was called by the police and the bruised and battered body, apparently dead, was carried to the morgue. When it, rather he, arrived there some of the doctors made the discovery that Jimmy still lived, and so he was taken to the hospital, where he remained four months. His last narrow escape from death was when he drank a quantity of spirits of wine which he found in a cellar. Jimmy drank so much he was vomiting and tried to hang himself. He was sent to prison for three months for attempting suicide.

The first Saturday afternoon in March, 1910, Jimmy started out to have some amusement and bearing that the Salvation Army which had just arrived from England was going "to show" at Harry Hill's notorious resort he concluded to go there and see what kind of people the soldiers were. When he arrived at Hill's he found that there was an admission fee, and he, with a drinker's courage, determined to spend the price of admission in a different manner. Towards night he stole into a dive in Water street



JIMMY KENNY—"ASHBARREL JIMMY."

where his Whyo friends painted his back and served his face the same way and wound up the performance by rolling the unfortunate man in the mud of the dive floor. Jimmy, after submitting to their treatment, thought they would let him stay there all night, but they kicked him out on the street.

Just as Jimmy reached the sidewalk he saw a policeman, came along, and sent a man's legs in the barrel set to work to discover who was the owner of them and why he had them in such a position. He took out his club and struck the inverted man on the side of his head. These men are sometimes resorted to by policemen to secure drunken men. From the depth of the barrel came a voice which the policeman at once recognized. He rapped for assistance, and when another officer appeared on the scene an effort was made to get Jimmy from his novel but painful position. They pulled at the protruding feet, but Jimmy failed to respond. His clothes

having been caught on the nails which had been driven through the barrel. They pulled until the old rotten shoes gave way and were left in their hands. The policeman then threw the barrel down on its side, and laying hold of the unfortunate man's feet they dragged the barrel and its howling occupant towards the police station.

A pitiful sight was poor Jimmy when he reached the station. His face which had been blacked by the tongs in the dive was all battered and bruised and the paint on his face mingled with blood was strongly suggestive of a sculptured Indian. His clothes were all torn and his shoes gone. How complete the ruin. How perfect the wreck.

On the following morning Jimmy was brought before the police judge at the Tombs. There was no one to explain why the unfortunate man presented such an appearance because he had no friends to institute an inquiry in his behalf. Perhaps the abject appearance of the man touched the judge's heart, for he said:

"You've been here so often that I think that I shall have to send you to Blackwell's Island for a long term."

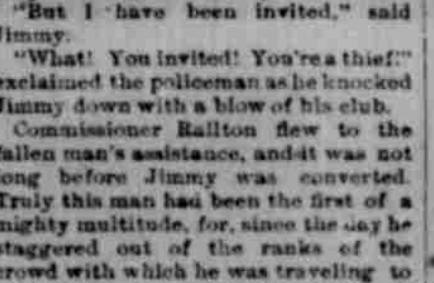
Inspector Byrnes, who was standing by, also knew Jimmy, whose picture a doubt was in the Rogues' gallery, and spoke to the judge.

"I hear so much about this Salvation Army it might do to let them try their hand on Jimmy."

The judge acquiesced and let Jimmy go after exacting a promise from him that he would attend the Salvation Army meetings.

Jimmy had no intention of keeping his promise and a few hours after his discharge from the Tombs found him walking the downward path again. In the afternoon, however, more through fear, Inspector Byrnes, through his desire to reform, he went into the Salvation Army hall on Baxter street, where he was dealt with about his soul, but to no apparent purpose. He went out and boarded a car, and when the conductor came around to collect the fare he found his tough-looking customer moneyless. Jimmy was seized and thrown off the car, and his tottering limbs gave way and he fell on his head and sustained a severe scalp wound. A nightwatchman came to his assistance and carried him into his barroom, where he roughly washed the wound and gave Jimmy a glass of brandy.

When Jimmy went out he was attracted back to the Army hall again. When he arrived at the hall he started to enter, but a policeman stopped him



HOW "ASHBARREL JIMMY" WAS FOUND.

and told him they didn't want no such people as him in the army.

"But I have been invited," said Jimmy.

"What? You invited? You're a thief!" exclaimed the policeman as he knocked Jimmy down with a blow of his club.

Commissioner Bailton flew to the fallen man's assistance, and it was not long before Jimmy was converted. Truly this man had been the first of a mighty multitude, for since the day he staggered out of the ranks of the cursed with which he was traveling to hell, thousands have followed his example.

It would be a sorry day that saw any of the fifteen hundred command'g officers or two thousand local officers in our ranks in the United States so far forgetting their position or their duty as to fail in stooping to the lowest of the low, bringing them to know the joy, the peace, the virtue and usefulness of a sociology governed by both the heart and the mind. A peaceful smile on Jimmy's face almost hides the marks of disfigurement from view and the darkness of despair that for years filled his soul has been dispersed by the rays of the sun of righteousness which has risen in his soul.

Since his conversion Jimmy has served the Lord faithfully in the Salvation Army. On what might be called "state occasions" Jimmy goes to the front to carry the colors, for he loves them, and who can blame him? Was he not the first-born beneath these folds in the United States? And if the wind is too high for him to handle the flagpole he bows the head and is content. He is looking forward with genuine pleasure to the visit of Gen. Booth to this country in the autumn. And Gen. Booth will be glad to see the first of the mighty multitude enrolled under the tri-colored flag of the Salvation Army in America and hear "Ashbarrel Jimmy" sing the song he loves so well:

Your garments must be white as snow, prepare to meet your God.

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